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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FLOOD).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 31, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE FLOOD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2023, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HISTORY REPEATED ITSELF ONCE MORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today appalled and disgusted and brokenhearted. Like so many others, I am still struggling to process the sheer inhumanity on display in the murder of Tyre Nichols.

Last week, our Nation watched helplessly as another innocent Black man was beaten to death by men sworn to

serve and protect. In the final moments of his life, Tyre Nichols cried out for help as he struggled to understand what he possibly could have done to deserve such a fate.

As a mother, seeing Tyre cry out for his mom deeply pains me. As a Black woman, I am furious at the injustice that Black Americans face every day. As a human being, the vicious murder I have seen leaves me shaken to my core.

Tyre Nichols was a human being with a life as beautiful as any other. He was a photographer. He loved skateboarding. He was a son to a loving mother and a father to a 4-year-old son.

Tyre will never get to see his son grow up, and his son will never get another hug from his father.

I mourn Tyre, and I pray for his loved ones. I mourn Keenan Anderson, who invoked George Floyd's name when he, too, was killed by police this month. I mourn Elijah McClain, Philando Castile, Tamir Rice, and every other Black life stolen from us by police.

I have grown weary of my mourning, though, Mr. Speaker, because history has repeated itself once again.

The murder of Tyre Nichols comes 3 years after the murder of Breonna Taylor. It comes 9 years after the murder of Michael Brown. It comes 14 years after the murder of Oscar Grant. It comes 153 years after the murder of Henry Truman in 1870.

Nothing we can do will ever bring back Tyre Nichols, Daunte Wright, Eric Garner, or any Black American killed by a system that did not value their lives. We can, however, demand accountability and sweeping reforms from police departments that have built, maintained, and even encouraged a culture of brutality and even racism.

The time is now to reevaluate and reimagine the role of police in our community. We must stop waiting for justice and start doing our jobs.

As public servants, we have a duty to do right by our communities, even if that means starting the long, difficult process of reforming and restructuring our justice system. It is the duty of the Federal Government to ensure that law enforcement is used to protect communities, not tear them apart.

Last Congress, the House passed the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, but the Senate blocked it from becoming law. That was a disappointment, but it cannot be a defeat.

This Congress, we have a new opportunity to end qualified immunity and protect our communities. However, that opportunity will not seize itself.

House Republicans have spent endless time and resources establishing committees for conspiracy theories but have offered zero solutions to the rising tide of police brutality. I call on all of my colleagues to commit or recommit themselves to fixing the fundamental flaws in the fabric of our justice system. If we fail to do so, our society will forever be one in which police are seen as an occupying force instead of a force for good.

RECOGNIZING VIRGINIA SMITH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, throughout the course of our lives, we are both blessed and fortunate to cross paths with and befriend individuals who harbor a profound sense of dedication toward serving others and their communities. To me and countless others, Virginia Smith of Stokes County, North Carolina, is one of those people.

This year, she will retire as the chairwoman of the Stokes County Republican Party, a position she has held since 2003.

To know Virginia is to know someone who lives and breathes the meaning of possessing a servant's heart.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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